

DISCOVER WHO LIVES IN THE FOREST

Hey, Mom, we'll take the lower trail and meet you at the big tree.

Let's see if we can find clues about what animals live in the forest.

Yuck! Some dog pooped right on the path.

Wait a minute. It looks like a long fur ball. I bet that's coyote scat.

Hey, Fin, I found some brown fur on this thorn bush. I wonder what animal it belongs to.

It's too high for a raccoon or a coyote. I bet it's deer fur.

Not so fast, Fin. Those are coyote tracks! See how they are in a tight row.

Kat's right. A coyote walks by placing his hind feet in the footprints left by his front feet. This makes the set of tracks narrow. Dogs put their feet beside their last track, making wider, overlapping tracks. With dog tracks, you can see all four paw marks. With coyotes, it looks like they have only two feet like a person.

Look at these hair balls. They look like huge butterfly cocoons.

And I think I know who they belong to!

OK, Kat, I recognize these tracks. A dog ran through the mud along the creek.

Hey, someone has been chopping down these trees!

And that someone is a beaver.

Mom, you'll never guess all the animals we found on our trek.

Yeah, bears have been passing through!

That's odd. We never saw any wildlife.

When you go through the forest, you might not see too many animals apart from squirrels, a few bird species and lots of insects. That's because larger mammals are active at first light (when you're still in bed) and at dusk. Yet, you might see signs of all kinds of animals.

You can recognize coyote scat (the scientific name for poop) by all the undigested hair, small bones, seeds and sometimes bits of plastic in it. Coyotes also tend to poop in the middle of pathways and sidewalks to mark their territory. Dogs usually poop off to the side of trails.



JACQUIE PEARCE

Deer move almost silently through forests, making narrow trails that connect to grassy areas. If scared, deer will jump through hedges or brambles, leaving fur on the thorns. Deer like to graze in open meadows and seek shelter in the forest.



Living in lakes, marshes and creeks, beavers gnaw down trees with their huge teeth. Beavers fall the trees toward the water. Then they chew the trunk and branches into smaller pieces. Beavers are well known for building dams out of branches. Look for a beaver's lodge (house) – a large dome made out of sticks.

It must have been something big and strong. A bear?

Bears will bite, leave claw marks and rub their fur on trees to signal other bears. If you see scratches and strands of black fur on a tree, you're in bear country. Time to head out!



Owls perch in tall trees to survey their surroundings. What Kat found are "owl pellets." Owls cough up these hair-covered pellets which are full of bones of prey. If you find owl pellets, look up. You might see an owl staring down at you.

A Walk on the Wild Side

Can't wait to get out and explore the forest.

Yes! Summer is finally here. Why not go on a wildlife adventure at a local park, in a ravine or along the shoreline?

I hope we see elephants!

Ah... really, Fin, elephants?

TIPS FOR NATURE WATCHING

1. Get an early start. You'll see the most birds and mammals in the early morning. By mid-day, many animals are resting in their hiding places.



- 2. Walk, stop and scan.** Be patient and silent as you move through the forest. Wild animals have keen senses and often hear and smell you long before you see them. They are easily scared, so move quietly.
- 3. Bring a buddy!** Make sure your parents know exactly where you are going and for how long. Always bring a friend along too.
- 4. Be safe.** Have fun and explore but stay clear of areas with predatory animals such as bears or cougars. Be careful near cliffs and fast-moving water.
- 5. Snap pictures.** Seeing a deer or beaver is exciting. It's even better if you can get a picture too. Photos are also a great way to help identify plants, trees and animals after you get home.

Win a camera!

Send us your best nature photo and you could win a fabulous camera, courtesy of Broadway Camera!



Heron. Photo: Martin Passchier



WILDLIFE MANNERS

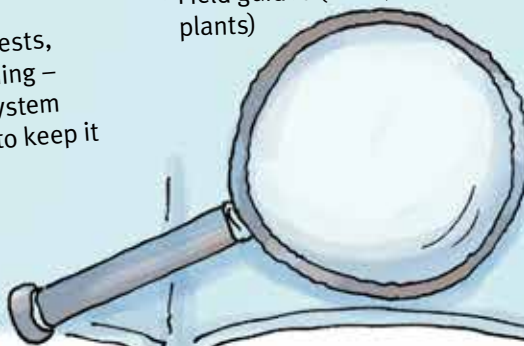
Good naturalists observe some simple rules:

- Leave nature exactly as you found it.
- Tread lightly, trying not to crush plants, disturb root systems or harm anything!
- Take out all your trash (even trash from others).
- Leave abandoned bird nests, shells, flowers – everything – where it is. Nature is a system and all the parts matter to keep it whole.

NATURALIST GEAR

You don't need a lot of supplies. Here's a checklist:

- Outdoor shoes (comfortable!)
- Whistle (in case you get lost)
- Compass
- Cell phone (fully charged)
- Backpack with water and snacks
- Camera and binoculars
- Magnifying glass and notebook
- Small first-aid kit
- Field guides (birds, insects and plants)



Whether it's of a **snail**, a **flower**, a **heron fishing** or a **grazing deer**, we want your best nature picture. The best photo selected by the *Bark!* crew wins a **samsung 16 megapixel camera** (with accessory kit), plus the photo will be printed in an issue of *Bark!*.

Send your entry to BC SPCA *Bark!* Photos, 1245 East 7th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5T 1R1 or email to kids@spca.bc.ca. **Remember:** If possible, take your pictures with a real camera and not a cell phone. Also, make sure you use the **highest-quality setting** for pictures. The deadline for entry is August 15, 2015.

Nature trek challenge!

To celebrate **Canada's 150th birthday**, your family can explore Canada's national parks for **FREE!** But you can also explore local parks to discover nature's wonders.

Having a theme for your hike can make a walk in the woods an adventure. See if you can squeeze in **four nature missions** this summer!

1 Frog find

From massive bullfrogs to endangered leopard frogs, B.C. is home to 13 species of frogs and toads. You often find frogs sunning themselves on pond shorelines, on logs or peeking from amongst lily pads.

Ponds, ditches and bogs are great places to find frogs. Sneak up quietly or you'll send them diving deep into the water to hide. Google "**B.C. frogs**" to find frog images and the different croak sounds they make.

2 Insect investigation

You can find all kinds of insect "wildlife" in your backyard or nearby park. How many insects do you know?

As a start, see if you can find these 10 common bugs: earwig, grasshopper, honeybee, cricket, centipede, dragonfly, sowbug, aphid, ladybug and spittlebug. Google "**native B.C. insects**" to find photos.

Nature hike tips!

The early morning hiker gets the picture. By mid-day, when it is hot, many birds and mammals are resting in their hiding places.

Be a jungle ninja! Be patient and quiet as you move through the forest. Forest residents dart away from noisy people.

Safety first! Have fun but keep clear of cliffs and fast-moving water. Also, keep out of bear and cougar country.

Hike with a buddy. Tell parents exactly where you are going and when you plan to be home. In case you get lost, rescuers need to know where to search.

Leave only footprints. Don't remove flowers, berries and things like abandoned bees' nests from the forest. They are part of the ecosystem. Plus, other visitors after you can also "discover" them.

Trek gear checklist:

- Backpack with water, snacks, hat, sunscreen and sunglasses
- Sturdy, comfortable shoes
- Magnifying glass and small notebook
- Camera and binoculars
- Whistle (in case you get lost), compass and flashlight
- Cell phone (fully charged)
- Small first-aid kit and bug repellent

3 Shoreline search

At low tide, sea water traps in pools on rocky shores. These tidal pools teem with sea creatures. You can peer into the pools and see shore crabs, limpets, anemones [a-nem-on-ees], sea stars, urchins, sea palms, barnacles, chitons [kyte-ons] and sometimes even octopuses.

Tread cautiously, being careful not to crush mussels or barnacles clinging to tidal pool edges – everything is alive. You might even see an oyster catcher – a crow-sized black bird with a long orange beak – looking for little crabs or prying open limpets.

4 Bird trek

How many species of birds can you name? Most people know only a few, yet there are hundreds of different species in B.C. On this trek, try to find at least 20 different species.

One of the best ways to spot birds is to listen first. Then slowly turn to the sound. Search with your eyes before using your binoculars. To help identify each bird, take note of the size and shape. Look for special feather colours, the shape of the beak and markings on the chest and back.



PHOTO: MAN-KAY KOON

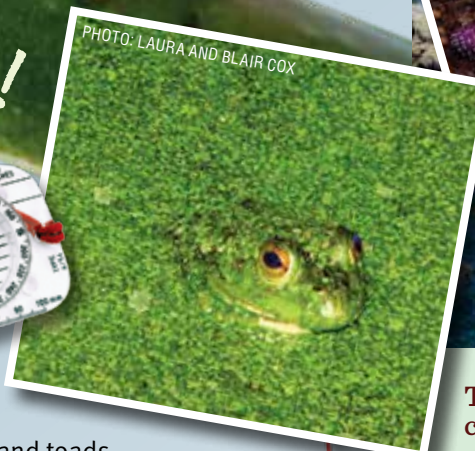


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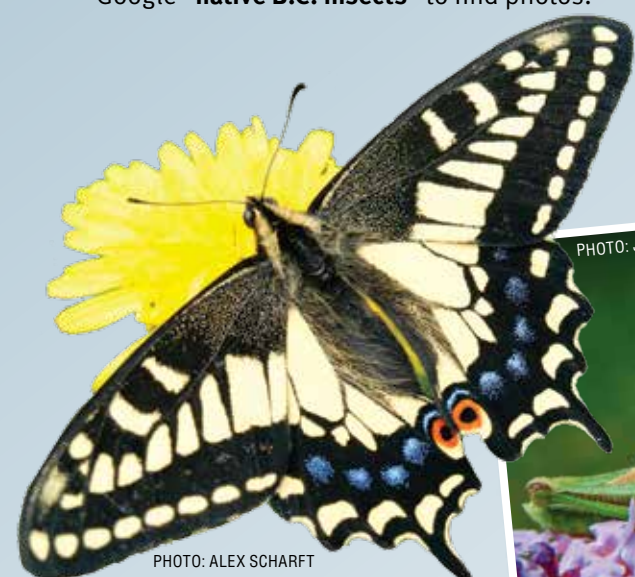


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